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Virgil's Choice of Aeneas in the Light of His Purpose in Writing the Aeneid

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VIRGIL'S CHOICE OF AENEAS IN THE LIGHT
OF HIS PURPOSE IN WRITING THE
AENEID

BY
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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of Loyola University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

JULY 1950
LIFE

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After his elementary education at Our Lady Help of Christians School, Chicago, he attended St. Ignatius High School, Chicago, graduating therefrom in June 1942.

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At this time he registered as a graduate student in the Department of Classics at Loyola University.
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Since Virgil's purpose in writing the Aeneid was to sing of a Roman hero, it is often a problem to the student of Latin literature why he chose Aeneas as his hero and rejected Romulus. Romulus had been accepted as the founder of Rome by authorities. The legend of Romulus had been so deeply ingrained in the minds of the people that an epic concerning it would have been assured of immediate popularity. The Annals of Ennius and the Antiquities of Dionysius\(^1\) state that Romulus was a decidedly Roman character, and an epic concerning him would have had a distinctive Roman touch. Many of the scenes and places which were associated with Romulus were also familiar to the Romans of Virgil's time. The pride of Virgil's Rome, the temple of Jupiter, the Ruminal fig-tree, and the famous hills of Rome were directly related to Romulus. The legend of Romulus also dealt with the religious and social organization of early Rome and easily admitted a connection with Augustus's intended religious and social reorganization.

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1 W.Y. Sellar, *The Roman Poets of the Augustan Age*, Oxford, 1898, 301
The legend of Romulus might have been treated to magnify the glory of the emperor. Augustus himself was considered the second founder of Rome and, at one time, seriously thought of taking the name of Romulus precisely because of this universal acclaim which he enjoyed. At first sight Romulus might have been the better subject for a national epic. The subject, however, upon which Virgil bestowed such enduring favor was typically of Greek origin. Apparently there was no germ in this subject which might be developed into an epic of lasting fame, and, though recognized by official Rome, was hardly accepted by the Roman populace as a well known tale.

... for though the story had been accepted by the Romans and even embodied in diplomatic documents, it was in no sense really popular, evolved from a combination of discrepant legal tales by a rationalizing and rather dull philology.

Why then did Virgil take Aeneas as the hero of his epic?

The purpose of this thesis is to show, in the light of Virgil's intention in writing an epic, why he chose Aeneas to be his hero. The answer to this question requires an historical study of Aeneas, because it is necessary to give the reader a knowledge of Aeneas as Virgil saw him in Greek and early Latin

2 Ibid., 300
poetry. With what qualities did Homer invest the character of Aeneas to convince Virgil that he was of epic and heroic stature? What graces and attributes did later Greek and Latin poets add to the character of Aeneas? Finally, what characteristics did Virgil want his epic hero to have? These questions must first be answered before we can hope to account for Virgil's choice of Aeneas as the hero of the *Aeneid*.

In the development of this thesis it is neither necessary nor to our purpose to discuss the actual Romulus legend at any length. Consequently, the Romulus legend will only be considered as a negative norm to give more probable reasons for Virgil's choice of Aeneas.

In Chapter I we will consider the Aeneas of Homer's *Iliad*, the Aeneas who was non-Virgilian. The purpose of this chapter will be to show the divine lineage, the favor of the gods and the great temporal heritage to the throne of Troy with which Homer invested Aeneas. It was this first conception of Aeneas which made him attractive to Virgil as an epic hero.

Chapter II will deal with the spread of the Aeneas legend. The spread of the cult of Aphrodite with which Aeneas was intimately connected accounts for the legend's being received by the Greeks. Particular attention will be given Hesoid
and Stesichorus who were the main Greek contributors to the legend, while less attention will be paid to other Greek contributors of less importance. When Virgil began to look for a hero, he wanted a man with a literary tradition behind him. Such a tradition would insure his hero of immediate fame among the men of letters of his day. This chapter shows Aeneas in Greek poetry and hence with a tradition of long standing.

Chapter III will deal with the reception of the Aeneas legend at Rome. Here we will see its conflict with the native legends of the founding of the city. A most important question concerning the official recognition of the legend will be answered. After the legend was received, was there any use imperial Rome had for it? Another topic of treatment will be the place Aeneas played in earlier Latin literature.

Mr. Henry W. Prescott states that the Aeneid was made to react to the critical conditions which gave it birth.\(^4\) Virgil made his epic a handmaid of the state.\(^5\)

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4 Henry W. Prescott, The Development of Virgil's Art Chicago, 1936, 187

5 Ibid.
Mr. Charles Knapp is of the same opinion and with him and Mr. Prescott I will accept the thesis that Virgil's motivation in the Aeneid was a political and social reform joined with an attempt to glorify Augustus. Virgil himself states that the fato profugus had a purpose which was inferre deos Latio. The intention of Virgil in writing the Aeneid will be the subject of the fourth chapter.

Chapter V undertakes to show Virgil's final choice of Aeneas in view of his proposed epic. The two sources from which he could choose his hero were the Aeneas legend and the Romulus legend. Virgil could not very well choose Romulus as his hero because of several factors related in the lineage of Romulus. Aeneas who has been shown to be a direct descendant of the gods, offered Virgil a subject which, though vague and indefinite and not very well known to the people, could, nevertheless, assign to Rome and Augustus a more sublime origin. The body of facts concerning Aeneas gives us no definite picture of him other than that he was a great hero and beloved of the gods. Consequently, a poet who would treat him would not be forced to paint a par-

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6 Charles Knapp, The Aeneid of Virgil, Chicago, 1902, 37
ticular Aeneas but would be allowed, by the lack of definiteness, to mold the character of this hero to fit his designs. Aeneas could be so molded to glorify Augustus and act as the prototype of all great emperors. Finally, the ultimate choice of Virgil must have been greatly influenced by the claim of the Julian House to be direct descendants of Aeneas and his goddess mother. This will be the subject of the fifth chapter.
Many people who read the Iliad and are impressed with its epic nature come to feel that Achilles is the perfect hero and that any other true epic hero should be in the likeness of this prototype. And so when they read the Aeneid, they expect to find another Achilles and are disappointed with Virgil’s delineation of Aeneas’ character.

First of all, these critics of the Aeneid make the common mistake of setting up iron-clad rules for a type of literature. Just as this cannot be done in tragedy, it cannot be done in epic poetry, or lyric poetry, or the novel form. Just as no one can say that all tragedy must be Sophoclean or Aeschylean or Euripidean, so no one can say that all epics must be Homeric, or Virgilian - or Shakespearean, for that matter.

These things are determined by the writer’s concept of the nature of his art-form, by his purpose in writing, by the nature of his material, by the times in which he writes, and by the previous progress of the technique he is using.
To all, it is obvious that Aeneas, as treated by Virgil, does not have the same qualities as the Achilles created by Homer ten centuries earlier. Virgil's concept of the epic was different as were his aims in writing; his material, while related to that of Homer, was substantially different; and, so far as the times were concerned, ideals, man's relations with his fellow men, with the gods, and, in fact, the whole social and political atmosphere had changed. Moreover, the art of writing had developed and was more urbane. Is it surprising then, that Virgil's hero should have qualities different than Homer's? Is it not unfair to approach a piece of literature with preconceived ideas as to what it should be?

For these reasons, it will be interesting and pertinent to our purpose to study Aeneas, as conceived by Homer, and to discover, if we can, why Virgil reached back to Homer in choosing the hero of his own epic.

Before we approach Aeneas in the Illiad, it is well to have some norm by which we can judge an epic hero. Mr. T. R. Glover in his article Virgil's Aeneas sums up Achilles as an epic hero in the following words:
To sum up, Achilles satisfies us, because at every point we feel that he is a man; he thinks, he feels, he suffers as a man; and his experience, deep and intense as they are, are the common lot of humanity, felt and interpreted by the poet.7

With Mr. Glover we might well accept the thesis that Achilles is an epic hero and take his character as the prototype of all epic heroes. An epic hero must be a man who stands above the ordinary race of men. He must embrace all the feelings, emotions, and convictions which any human being would feel in like circumstances and, despite these common emotions, the epic hero must excite our admiration. In short, the epic hero must be true to life.

As Tragedy is an imitation of personages better than the ordinary man, we in our way should follow the example of good portrait-painters, who reproduce the distinctive features of a man and at the same time, without losing the likeness, make him handsomer than he is. The poet, in like manner in portraying men quick to anger, or with similar infirmities of character, must know how to represent them as such, and at the same time as good men, as Agathon and Homer have represented Achilles.8

Thus Aristotle in his Poetics is in accord with our thesis that the epic hero is a true imitation of life. As we

7 T.R. Glover, "Virgil's Aeneas", Classical Review, XVII, 1903, 34

begin this chapter it is well to keep these points in mind and see whether they are verified in Aeneas as he appears in the Iliad. Virgil was looking for an epic hero. With the qualities which Aeneas embodies in the Iliad, it will become more apparent that Aeneas would be the likely choice of Virgil.

The passages in the Iliad in which Aeneas appears are various, but the one pertaining to our present inquiry is found in the twentieth book. Aeneas' appearance in this book adds nothing to the story but rather hinders the main action. Because Aeneas appears to have no influence upon the sequence of events in the Iliad, it is quite conceivable that this passage did not come from the pen of Homer. Mr. Glover explains the passage as an interpolation into the text and cites Mr. Andrew Lang in confirmation of his thesis.9

What, then, is the purpose of this passage? Mr. Glover sums it up in the following words:

It is quite clear that the encounter of Achilles and Aeneas is in itself trivial, and that, moreover, it blocks the progress of the story. What is its explanation? It is generally pronounced to be a late insertion into the poem, due to the desire of a Homeric poet to please some dynasty or great family in the Troad, who wished to connect themselves with the founders of Troy, and fixed upon Aeneas as their founder.10

9 Glover, Virgil's Aeneas, 89
10 Ibid., 89
Despite the discussion over this passage, I firmly believe that it does have a great deal of literary and historical authenticity. The purpose in mentioning this point is to show the reader that Aeneas had some great qualities which claimed the admiration of a ruling class and, in their estimation, was great enough to be their ancestor.

Aeneas reaches his full stature as an epic hero in the twentieth book of the Iliad. We come upon him as he spreads havoc among the Greeks, Aeneas comes upon Achilles who is sorely grieved by the death of his friend Patroclus, and after a wordy debate the two, Aeneas and Achilles, join battle.

The significance of the words which passed between Aeneas and Achilles is not to be underestimated; for in these few words, in reply to Achilles, Aeneas gives us his whole genealogy.

Zeus begot Dardanus. And Dardanus in turn begot a son, king Erecthonius, who became the richest of mortal men. And Erecthonius begat Troas to be king among the Trojans and from Troas again three peerless sons were born. Ilus, Assaracus, and god-like Ganymedes that was born the fairest of mortal men; wherefore, the gods caught him up on high that he might dwell with the immortals. And Ilus begot a son, peerless Laomedon and Laomedon begat Tithonus and Priam and Clytius and Hicetaon, a scion of Ares. And Assaracus begat Capys and he Anchises; but Anchises begat me and Priam begat Hector. 11

Thus from the mouth of Aeneas himself we hear his own
genealogy, which can be traced back to the gods. He is not a
mere mortal but, as it were, embodies some of the graces of the
gods. His strength and courage at meeting this hero of the
Greeks are not to be wondered at when we see that he claims
Zeus as an ancestor. Even more important at a time when he is
thrown into mortal combat with the mighty Achilles is favor
which he enjoys in the eyes of the immortals. Aeneas' favor is
shown clearly when he is thrown into the struggle with Achilles.

Achilles wanders about the field of battle seeking to
avenge the death of his friend Patroclus. His first encounter is
with Aeneas, who has been aroused to battle by the promises and
cajoleries of Apollo.

Aeneas, counsellor of the Trojans, where with thou was
want to declare unto the princes of the trojans over thy
wine, that thou wouldst do battle man to man against
Achilles, son of Peleus.12

Aeneas knew the fierceness of Achilles when that
warrior was aroused to battle. He must have heard stories of
this raging lion and may have seen him in battle. Aeneas is a
bit reluctant to do battle with Achilles, but, backed by the
promises of Apollo, girds himself for the struggle.

12 Ibid., 81-85
TABLE I

GENEALOGY OF AENEAS

Zeus
  └── Dardanus
    └── Ericthonus
      └── Troas
        └── Ilus
            └── Tithonus
            └── Priam
                └── Hector
        └── Assaracus
            └── Clytius
        └── Ganymedes
            └── Capys
                └── Anchises-Aphrodite
                    └── Aeneas
Nay, warrior, come, pray thou also to the gods that are forever; for of thee too men say that thou was born of Aphrodite, the daughter of Zeus, while he is sprung from a lesser goddess. For thy mother is daughter of Zeus, and his of the old man of the sea. Nay, bear thou straight against him thy stubborn bronze, nor let him anywise turn thee back with words of contempt and with threatings.13

Armed with the promises of the god, Aeneas enters the field of battle. He comes upon Achilles and in true Greek fashion, Achilles taunts Aeneas and tries every means possible to frighten him. Aeneas is not taken back by the taunts of the mighty Greek but, spurred on by the advice of the god Apollo, meets the challenge of Achilles with a strong reply.

Son of Peleus, think not with words to affright me, as I were a child, seeing I know well of myself to utter taunts and withal speech that is seemly. I declare that I am the son of the great hearted Anchises, and my mother is Aphrodite. Glib is the tongue of mortals, and words there be therein many and manifold, and of speech the range is wide on this side and that. Whateover word thou speakest, such shalt thou also bear. But what need have we twain to bandy with strifes and wranglings one with the other like women, that when they have waxed wroth in soul devouring strife go forth into the midst of the street and wrangle one against the other with words true and false; for even these does wrath bid speed. But for battle, seeing that I am eager therefor, shalt thou not with words turn me until we have fought with the bronze spear man to man; nay, come let us forthwith make trial one with the other with the bronze-tipped spear.14

13 Ibid., 201-208
14 Ibid., 208-258
Aeneas' own lips tell us the type of man he is as he expressly states that he is the son of a goddess. Upon her he relies for the strength and courage needed to do battle with the Grecian hero. The threats of Achilles make no impression upon him, for he thinks words are idle and can do nothing. Aeneas at once realizes the greatness of his undertaking but is not the least bit daunted by it. The contrast between the Aeneas, when the prospect of battle is proposed to him by the god, the worried and fretful Aeneas, and the Aeneas, courageous and strong, after the encouragement given by the god, is sufficient to show the influence this god had upon his actions. Buoyed by his help, Aeneas himself suggests that they two prove their claims by the spear.

Without a moment's hesitation, Aeneas is the first to hurl the 'bronze-tipped' spear. A mighty thrust sends the spear hurling through the air. Achilles is at first taken back by the impetuosity of this Trojan. He can hardly believe his eyes as he raises his shield to protect himself from the death-dealing spear.

Not a moment too soon does Achilles raise his shield to protect himself from the crashing spear of Aeneas. What is it that has transformed Aeneas into a warrior bold enough to attack Achilles? By no mortal agent could he have acquired
sufficient courage and skill to attack this fearless warrior of the Greeks. The answer lies in Apollo's words of encouragement. Were it not for these, Aeneas, mindful of Achilles' rage and strength, would have retreated at the very sight of the Grecian hero.

After he hurled the spear, Aeneas was left defenseless at the mercy of Achilles. The son of Anchises does not cower but waits for the Greek's attempt at his life. The mighty arm of Achilles rises and thrusts its spear at the defenseless object. Achilles stands wondering at the courage of Aeneas. Can this be mortal man, he thinks, who would dare to stand and meet the spear of the son of Peleus? Aeneas, however, meets the spear and is saved from death by an inch. Here Aeneas shows the first sign of fear, but, nevertheless, he does not turn and flee from the scene. As Achilles draws his sharp sword, Aeneas picks up a rock, "one that not two mortals could bear." Aeneas in his impetuosity would have hurled the rock at Achilles and would have been left defenseless to be robbed of life at the point of Achilles' sword, but for the intervention of the gods.

The final episode of the battle brings out clearly the esteem of the gods for Aeneas. Aeneas would have been killed but for the intercession of the old man of the sea, Poseidon, who
beseeches the gods of Olympus to spare the life of Aeneas. For Poseidon left the abode of the gods and went among the spears and arrows of battle and snatched Aeneas from the sword of Achilles. The Grecian hero was about to strike, but Aeneas disappeared and was borne in the arms of Poseidon behind the lines to a place of refuge and safety. Although Aeneas was urged by Apollo to do battle with Achilles, he is, nevertheless, admonished by Poseidon for his impetuosity.

Aeneas, what god is it that thus biddeth thee in blindness of heart to do battle man to man with the high-hearted son of Peleus, seeing he is a better man than thou, and therewithal dearer to the immortals? Nay, draw thou back, whencesoever thou fallest in with him, lest even beyond thy doom thou enter the house of Hades. But when it shall be that Achilles hath met his death and fate, then take thou courage to fight among the foremost, for there is none other of the Acheans that shall slay thee.15

Achilles is left in a daze by the sudden disappearance of Aeneas. At once he recognizes the workings of some god and is not loath to make mention of it.

Now look you, verily a great marvel is this that mine eyes behold. My spear lieth here upon the ground, yet the man I nowise see at whom I hurled it, eager to slay him. Verily, it seemeth likewise that Aeneas is dear to the immortal gods, albeit I deemed that his boasting was idle and vain.16

15 Ibid., 333-339
16 Ibid., 340-344
From the very lips of Achilles we hear that Aeneas was held in high esteem by the gods. It appears that Achilles was not speaking mere idle words when he made the utterance that Aeneas was dear to the gods; for he himself realized that, being a great hero, no mortal man would dare to do battle with a Greek of his courage. Achilles must have suspected Aeneas' favor with the gods when Aeneas was not taken back by his threats. This present incident confirmed his opinion. He knew that Aeneas was not a mere soldier but must have qualities which made him stand above the ordinary race of men and which would turn the gods in his favor.

Taking the words of Aristotle that an epic is a true imitation of life and that the hero must be an imitation of a personage better than ordinary, we might stop to analyze the character of Aeneas. Aeneas was a true man; for who is the man who would not show signs of fear when confronted with battle by the mighty Achilles? Aeneas was afraid and save for the encouragement given by Apollo and the help of Poseidon would have left the scene of battle either a coward or a corpse. Aeneas must have been a man better than ordinary because the concern and help of the gods would not have been showered upon a man who was not held in esteem by them. If what Aristotle says...
about the epic hero is true, Aeneas' epic stature begins to assert itself more and more.

Virgil was seeking a hero for his epic. Aeneas in his encounter with Achilles is shown to be a real hero, a hero bold enough to stand up to the greatest of the Greeks. Since it was Greek literature,\(^\text{17}\) that first woke the Roman mind to literary pursuits and since the Iliad of Homer was the greatest of Greek literature, we might conclude that the Roman men of letters were acquainted with the exploits and courageous doings of Achilles. Consequently, the introduction of any man who was bold enough to stand against the Grecian hero, Achilles, would most assuredly catch the attention of the Roman elite.

So much for the story of the fight between Achilles and Aeneas. However, the motives which promoted Poseidon to rescue Aeneas from the jaws of death are worthy of study. It is from this motivation that we see and establish for Aeneas a claim to the throne of Troy as it had been spun by the fates.

From the mount of Olympus Poseidon could see the raging battle. He called Hera to him and spoke the following words:

\(\text{17 Glover, Virgil, 110}\)
Now look you, verily have I grief for the great-hearted Aeneas, who anon shall go down to the house of Hades, slain by the son of Peleus, for that he listened to the biddings of Apollo that smiteth afar--fool that he was. Nor will the god in any wise ward from him woeful destruction. But wherefore should he, a guiltless man, suffer woes vainly by reason of sorrows that are not his own? Whereas he ever giveth acceptable gifts to the gods that hold broad heaven. Nay come, let us lead forth from out of death, lest the son of Cronos be any wise worth if so Achilles slay him; for it is ordained unto him to escape lest the race of Dardanus perish not without seed and be seen no more--of Dardanus whom the son of Cronos loved above all the children born to him from mortal women. For at length hath the son of Cronos come to hate the race of Priam; and now verily shall the mighty Aeneas be king among the Trojans, and his sons' that shall be born in days to come.18

We will accept the words of Poseidon as expressing the true will of the gods. In the genealogy of Aeneas19 we see that he and the present reigning king of Troy are related and that Aeneas has a legal title to the throne of Troy, second only to Hector. However, Aeneas had not been accepted by Priam as a member of the royal family, and in book thirteen he shows his indignation at this slight of Priam. "For he was wroth with divine Priam because he hounoured him not, though valiant among men."20

18 Homer, Iliad, XX, 295-308
19 Ibid., 215-239
20 Ibid., XIII, 460
Therefore, it appears that the quarrel with Achilles is quite trivial and, though unimportant in itself, was intended by the Homeric poet to please some dynasty of the Troad who wished to connect itself with the founders of Troy and fixed upon Aeneas as their ancestor.  

The introduction, then, of Aeneas' fight with Achilles and his rescue by Poseidon is explained by the existence of this dynasty or sacred family in the Troad with its tradition of descent from Aeneas.

This account of the fight with Achilles is quite satisfactory and is corroborated by two traditions of the Troad. The story has developed at the hands of later poets, who state that after his quarrel with Priam Aeneas sailed westward and left his son, Ascanius, in the Troad to rule over the remnants of the Trojans. This, however, does not coincide with the account given by Homer who states that there was no quarrel between Aeneas and Priam, but that after the death of Priam, the power was handed over to Aeneas and he remained in the Troad to rule over his people.

21 Glover, Virgil, 89
22 Ibid., 91
23 Ibid., 90
24 Prescott, The Development of Virgil's Art, 157
25 Glover, Virgil, 90
... Homer himself agrees neither with the one nor with the other, for he shows that Aeneas remained in Troy, and received the sovereignty and left the succession to his children's children, the family of Priam being extinguished.26

Homer does not allude to the fact that Aeneas wandered to Italy and there set up a kingdom. Aeneas' final settlement in Italy is the work of later poets, who wrote that the race of Aeneas would reign over all, and his children's children, meaning the Romans.

The Homeric prophecy, literally taken, restricts Aeneas and his family to the Troad. But in the course of three centuries following the Homeric epic Aeneas became a wanderer from his native land, and his wanderings carried him, in the Greek tradition of the story, even to Italy, where the founding of Rome itself is definitely attributed to the Trojans.27

Homer stands with Virgil in making Aeneas a great warrior, worthy to stand face to face in mortal combat with Achilles and dear enough to the gods to be rescued from death by the Earth-Shaker, and reserved for the fight again.

The purpose of this chapter is then clear. When

26 Ibid., 90
27 Prescott, The Development of Virgil's Art, 158
Virgil sat down to write his epic, he wanted a hero who was epic in character. Aristotle tells us that an epic is true to life and that the characters in an epic must be true men, different only in this from all men, that they are better than ordinary. Aeneas was such a man for he shows his human qualities in his reluctance to meet Achilles. He is a man whose piety is a pleasure to the gods. Aeneas was the type of man Virgil was looking for to invest him with all the characteristics which were the flower of Roman manhood. Virgil found his hero in Aeneas.
CHAPTER II

AENEAS IN GREEK LITERATURE

In this chapter we will trace the wanderings of Aeneas from Troy to Latium as they are set down in later poets and historians. Our purpose will be to show what later poets added to the character and story of Aeneas which gave it a literary tradition, thus making it a wise choice on Virgil's part for his own epic.

When we consider the facts which might have given Aeneas some prestige in the eyes of the Greeks, the growth of the legend will be comparatively easy to trace. Homer mentions that Aeneas was the son of a goddess and that he was destined by the fates to found an empire, "and now verily shall the mighty Aeneas be king of the Trojans, and his sons' that shall be born in days to come." 28

Though the character of Aeneas in the Iliad is well-developed, still it is hard to believe that Virgil took the main

28 Homer, Iliad, XX, 307-308
The wide spread reading of the Iliad by the Greeks is evidenced by inscriptions found in various localities. According to Homer Aeneas was to found a kingdom after the fall of Troy but the location of that kingdom is in no wise mentioned. The Greek world, as conversant with Homer, took the founding of the kingdom by Aeneas as a fact, but the location of that kingdom was by no means certain.

Ancient rulers, anxious to claim Aeneas as their
ancestor, were only too willing to assert that theirs was the kingdom founded by Aeneas. We might conclude that many ambitious potentates, trying to prove the same thing, attempted to show the descent of their kingdom from Aeneas. From these various attempts sprang many different versions of the wanderings.

Homer was the bible of the Greeks, and according to Homer Aeneas was of divine origin on his mother's side; he was a great noble and warrior, and founded a new Trojan kingdom somewhere after the fall of Troy. But where? Here was a challenge to the inventiveness of the Greeks too piquant, too intriguing to be ignored.

To substantiate our claim for the various Aeneas legends, and thus give some reasons for the claim of independent potentates that theirs was the promised land mentioned in the Iliad, we offer the following arguments.

During the legendary period from the tenth to the seventh century before Christ there was feverish activity on the Mediterranean. Trade began to grow and with this growth of trade, the culture of the Greek world spread along the coasts of this inland sea. Sailors brought wares from the Aegean ports and found markets for them in colonies established along the

Mediterranean. The crews of these merchant vessels, before setting out upon their voyage, put themselves under the protection of the goddess Aphrodite Aineias who was the patroness of the mariner. She was the one who caused the seas to smile propitiously upon the mariner and brought him safely to harbor after a storm. Upon arrival at port the crew would dedicate a shrine to the worship of their protectress, Aphrodite Aineias.

As other merchant vessels frequented these ports, their crews also became acquainted with the worship of Aphrodite Aineias. They were also sufficiently acquainted with the Iliad and, mindful of the fact that Aeneas had been promised rule of the Trojans, immediately connected Aphrodite with Aeneas who claimed her as his mother. Also mindful of the prophecy in the Iliad, these sailors quickly connected this shrine with Aeneas. This was the nation he had founded. He had landed here and dedicated this shrine to his mother. As time went on, many other cities claimed that Aeneas dedicated the shrine found in their city to the worship of Aphrodite.

Thus independent legends grew up wherever these shrines had been left by mariners centuries before. Many of the cities built memorials to Aeneas and claimed him as their founder.
It was the custom of these sailors to place their voyage under the protection of the goddess, Aphrodite Aineias. She was the goddess of love and the patroness of sailors. Her rude wooden image was carried in their ships and in every important seaport a shrine was dedicated to her worship. Sometimes these shrines were newly erected by the Greeks but it often happened that the Greeks supplanted Phoenician traders who worshipped a similar goddess under the name of Astarte. When this was the case the shrine of Astarte was rededicated to the worship of Aphrodite Aineias. Now the Greek merchants and sailors who frequented these ports were not philologists. Being ignorant of the true derivation of the epithet "Aineias" they made the natural error of thinking that it referred to Aphrodite's son, Aeneas.30

Dr. Lewis Richard Farnell intimately connects the growth of the legend of Aeneas with the spread of the cult of Aphrodite. For he says:

... it is possible that the maritime goddess of the East appeared in the form of Aphrodite Aeneias, the story of the wanderings of Aeneas being the legendary account of the diffusion of the cult.31

And later he reiterates this statement at greater length.

30 Heithaus, Ibid., 28
31 Lewis Richard Farnell, Cults of the Greek States, Oxford, 1896, II, 638
The later story of the wanderings of Aeneas is the story of the diffusion of the cult; and in most places where we find the name of Aeneas we find it in connexion with the worship of Aphrodite; at Aeneia, in Cythero, at Actium on the coast north of Buthrotum, on the south-east coast of Italy, and notably in Sicily. His landings at Delos and Crete, recorded by Dionysius of Halicarnasus and Virgil, may arise from some legendary association with that Cretan and Delian worship of Aphrodite which has been described. And in Argos where Pausanias saw a statue of Aeneas, we have noticed traces of the Oriental worship of the goddess. 32

The diffusion then of the cult of Aphrodite is the beginning of the Aeneas legend as it was found in later poets. The first mention of Aeneas in literature after Homer is found in Hesiod. In the Theogony he records the birth of Aeneas as the son of Aphrodite and Anchises. "And Aphrodite with the beautiful crown was joined in sweet love with the hero Anchises and bore Aeneas on the peaks of Ida with its many wooded glens." 33

This is the only mention of Aeneas in the Theogony. It is quite significant that Aeneas is mentioned in this work. The whole theme of the Theogony is a genealogy of great men and gods in the Greek world, as is easily deduced from the title of the work, Theogony, the genealogy of a god.

32 Ibid., 640-641
33 Hesiod, Theogony, trans by Hugh G. White, Loeb Series New York, 1926, 1007-1010
In a later work, The Hymn to Aphrodite, Hesiod gives a fuller account of the birth of Aeneas. After the conception of Aeneas, Anchises was quite disturbed that his son's mother should be a goddess. He feared the wrath of heaven. Aphrodite assured him that there was nothing which should be of concern to him. She related to Anchises his genealogy and showed that he also could claim descent from the gods. Yet, though Anchises did descend from the immortals, he was still mortal. His beauty attracted Aphrodite and she recognized her fault.

I would not have you be deathless among the deathless gods and live continually after such sort. Yet if you could live such as now you are in look and in form, and be called my husband, sorrow would not then enfold my careful heart. But, as it is, harsh old age which stands someday at the side of every man, deadly, wearying, is dreaded even by the gods. And now because of you I shall have great shame among the deathless ones hence forth, continually.34

Though she recognizes her fault, she seems quite complacent; for Anchises found favor with the gods and the son which she will bear will be great among men. In the prophesy concerning Aeneas she reiterates his kingship over the Trojans.

Anchises, most glorious of mortal men, take courage and be

34 Hesiod, Hymn to Aphrodite, 239-246
not too fearful in your heart. You need fear no harm from me nor from the gods; and you shall have a dear son who shall reign among the Trojans, and children's children after him, springing up continually. His name shall be Aeneas, because I felt awful grief in that I laid me in the bed of a mortal man; yet are those of your race always the most godlike of mortal men in beauty and stature.35

The son which shall be born of Aphrodite will inherit the graces both of his father and mother. He will not be an ordinary child but will share the graces of the nymphs among whom he shall be reared. His beauty will be great and please his father immensely. His character will be the admiration of all.

As for the child, as soon as he sees the light of the sun, the deep-breasted mountain Nymphs who inhabit the great and holy mountain shall bring him up. These nymphs shall keep my son with them and rear him, and as soon as he is come to lovely boyhood, the goddesses will bring him to you and show you your child. But, that I may tell you all that I have in mind, I will come here again towards the fifth year and bring you my son. So soon as ever you have seen him, a scion to delight the eyes, you will rejoice in beholding him; for he shall be most god-like.36

The poets of the Homeric cycle gave Aeneas a rather important role. In the Aethopis Arctinus of Miletus gives the

35 Ibid., 193-202
36 Ibid., 275-281
account of Aeneas' withdrawing from Troy after the siege by the Greeks. Once Aeneas had withdrawn from the city and retreated to the heights of Ida, no further account is given of him.

There is another tradition among the Cyclic poets that Aeneas did not withdraw voluntarily from Troy. According to this tradition Aeneas was taken captive by Achilles who was much enamoured by his beauty. "And he put Aeneas, the famous son of the horse-taming Anchises, on board his sea-faring ships, a prize surpassing those of all the Danaans."37

According to the version of the legend, Aeneas was taken to Pharsalia as a hostage. This is the only account of this particular version of the Aeneas legend which has been found. The author of this legend is unknown, but from previous evidence of Aeneas' esteem, as seen in Homer and Hesoid, we might conclude that the author of this version of the legend is not of the same race as Homer and Hesoid. This poet evidently had no desire to glorify Aeneas, seeing that he more likely wished to claim descent for his city and people from Achilles rather than from Aeneas. The better known legend among the Greeks, however, was

37 Ibid., "The Little Iliad", 14
that given by Homer in which Aeneas was promised rule over the Trojans. Most of the Cyclic poets agree with Homer and the prophesy giving Aeneas rule over the remnants of Troy. The traditional story is that Achilles was killed in battle. But according to the version given in the *Little Iliad*, Achilles was the victor and carried off Aeneas. There is no need to defend the account given in the other poets, since the version given in the *Little Iliad* is the only one known. The majority of the Homeric poets agree with Homer, and this innovation in the *Little Iliad* is rather difficult to explain and might be explained on the grounds given above which seem to be plausible.

Not one of the poets of the Homeric Cycle wishes to commit himself by saying apodictically that Aeneas founded any particular city. They rather shy from mentioning any foundations of Aeneas because, for them at least, the traditions of Aeneas' foundations might have been mere myths. The only other account given by them concerning Aeneas is the fact that he withdrew from Troy after the Greeks had gained entrance into the city. Hesoid does corroborate the prophesy given in the *Iliad* but does not mention any foundation of Aeneas. "... and you shall have a dear son who shall reign among the Trojans, and the
children's children after him, springing up continually."

Yet Virgil took the legend with the statement that Aeneas did sail to Latium and there set up his kingdom. This fact is definitely an innovation of later Greek poets.

The originator of the tradition that Aeneas wandered from Troy to Latium is Stesichorus. It is quite difficult to determine just when this poet lived. The only authority for his age is a Greek inscription relating to Sappho. The inscription reads: "Sappho flourished in the forty-second Olympiad (B.C. 612-609) in the time of Alcaeus, Stesichorus, and Pittacus." From this we might conclude that Stesichorus lived sometime after Hesoid and that the addition to the tradition that Aeneas landed in Latium, which came from the pen of Stesichorus, was not known to any of the earlier Homeric poets and Hesiod. This tradition is a decided innovation and our only foundation for its truth is a few fragments of Stesichorus on the Sack of Troy and the Tale of Orestes, which may have been an episode in the Sack of Troy.

In these works we have not actual extant lines relat-

38 Hesiod, "Hymn to Aphrodite," 196-197
ing to the subject, but from the interpretation given them by ancient authors, we may conclude that these were the foundation of Aeneas' leaving Troy and landing in Latium.

We can produce further evidence: in the Capitoline Museum in Rome, ascribed to the first century, is a sculptured slab known as the Tabula Iliaca. On this slab the central figure is Aeneas. He is leaving his homeland with his family and gods. Beneath the slab are the words, "Sack of Troy according to Stesichorus." Stesichorus then is probably the earliest authority for the addition to the legend that Aeneas fled from Troy and landed at Latium.

... under a representation of the Sack of Troy and flight of Aeneas which form the central part of the sculptured slab known as the Tabula Iliaca are the words "Sack of Troy according to Stesichorus." He was probably the earliest authority for the story of the flight of Aeneas to Italy.

Mr. T. R. Glover also confirms this interpretation of the Tabula Iliaca.

It has been supposed that Stesichorus first sent Aeneas to Italy, but this is merely an inference from the pictures of the Tabula Iliaca. This monument represents in a series of pictures the scenes of the Trojan War, and it indicates

39 Stesichorus, Fragments, trans. by J.M. Edmonds Loeb Series, New York, 1926, 46 (footnote)
in the spaces between them the sources from which they were taken,—the Iliad, for instance, the Aethopis of Arctinus, and lastly the Iliupersis of Stesichorus. The last picture represents Aeneas, holding the hand of Ascanius, Anchises, carrying the sacred things, and the trumpeter Misenus behind them, as they embark, and it bears the inscription \[\text{Ἀνήας σὺν τοῖς ἱδίοις ἄπαιρων εἰς τὴν Ἑσπερίαν} \] As Latin sources are not mentioned, it is a supposition that this last picture must have come from Stesichorus -- a Greek poet of Himera, in Sicily, who is supposed to belong to the seventh century B.C.40

Another piece of evidence to substantiate this opinion is the intrinsic worth and merit of Stesichorus as an author. In the Tale of Orestes the interest is placed on Clytaemnestra, and the fact that the story is a true tragedy and not a mere tale of blood shows the genius of Stesichorus' pen. Mr. Gilbert Murray is of the opinion that this genius of Stesichorus at originality changed this tale from a mere blood curdling story to real tragedy. He also thinks that the bare details of the story of Aeneas gave Stesichorus an opportunity to make an original contribution. He did this in the Sack of Troy. It is here that the introduction of Aeneas' fleeing to Latium might have had its foundation.

In the Agamemnon legend, for instance, the concentration of interest upon Clytaemnestra makes the story a true tragedy instead of an ordinary tale of blood is his (Stesichorus); Clytaemnestra's dream giving suck to a

40 Glover, Virgil, 97-98
serpent is his; the conscience-made Orestes is probably his; so are many of the details of the Sack of Troy, among them, if tradition is right, the flight of Aeneas to Italy.41

From this we might conclude that Stesichorus was the first to make any addition with a distinctive Virgilian touch to the story of Aeneas. This is a reasonable assumption because of the inscription on the Tabula Iliaca mentioned by Glover. Furthermore, Stesichorus must have been acquainted with the cult of Aphrodite and its spread throughout the Mediterranean world. If we are to believe Dr. Farnell that the wanderings of Aeneas are nothing more than the history of the spread of the cult, then Stesichorus, fully conversant with the cult of Aphrodite, incorporated Aeneas as wandering wherever shrines were dedicated to the worship of Aphrodite.

The question might arise as to whether it was Aeneas who founded these shrines. This is not quite clear. But the fact still remains that these shrines might have been the reason for Stesichorus' addition to the legend. Existing shrines dedicated to Aphrodite and Aeneas' connection with the goddess were the foundation for the growth of the legend among the more

41 Gilbert Murray, *Ancient Greek Literature*, London, 1907, 104
ancient authors. It is quite possible, therefore, that Stesichorus, mindful of the prophesy of Aeneas' rule over the Trojans, as were the ancient mariners, connected these shrines, probably existing in Latium, with Aeneas and took the step to say that Aeneas actually did land in Latium and there dedicated the shrine to his goddess mother.

It would greatly substantiate Stesichorus' claim, if Aeneas were a real person. There is good evidence for the fact that he was a real hero and not a mere fiction of Homer's imagination. It is quite illogical to conclude that the stories which grew up around these shrines along the coast of the Mediterranean were mere fables, and that they had no foundation in real life.

Since Aeneas was a popular character of the Greeks, as is evidenced by his place in Greek literature, we might attempt to prove his reality, other than mythical, by what has been discovered and proved about other characters in Greek literature.

Recent excavations of the ancient world lead us to believe that many of the characters and scenes in ancient literature were not mere fictions, but that they had some
foundation in real life. In the *Argonautica* of Appollonius of Rhodes, for instance, Jason, who carried the sheepskin, was not mere imagination. There was a man named Jason who did carry a sheepskin of gold. The story grew out of the exploits of the mariners who sailed the Euxine Sea and carried sheepskin loaded with gold dust from the river beds of Asia Minor. True, there never did exist a creature which was half man and half bull who feasted on Greek girls and boys. But from murals we know that bull baiting by unarmed boys and girls was a favorite sport among the Cretans. It is quite logical, therefore, to conclude from history that there was a Greek named Theseus who sailed to Crete and overthrew the Minoan hegemony.

From recent discoveries of Schliemann rather conclusive evidence establishes the fact that the palaces and scenes in the *Iliad* really did exist and that there was a real sack of Troy. This leads us to believe that the characters who appeared in the *Iliad* were real men and did play a real role in the Trojan War. Aeneas, as the object of the prophesy made by Poseidon, and the greatest of the Trojan heroes save Hector, was one of the more important characters in the *Iliad*. It is quite possible that there was a Trojan hero who survived the sack of Troy and with the remnants of the race sailed away to find a new home.
Did Aeneas really live? I think it more probable that he did than that he did not. Since then we have discovered the cities and palaces of the Homeric age and rather conclusive evidence of the sack of Troy, we might conclude with a probability verging on certainty that at least the principals of Homer's story were real persons. Among these is Aeneas most valiant of all the Trojans save Hector, destined by the fates to become the founder of a new Trojan kingdom after the fall of the house of Priam.42

Yet the reality of Aeneas' character is not an absolutely proved fact; we need more proof. Though the fact still remains that, if he be a real person, the probability of his connection with the shrines dedicated to the worship of Aphrodite becomes stronger.

As further proof that Aeneas landed at Latium, there is the authority of ancient historians. Dionysius of Halicarnasus gives substantiation to our assumption that Aeneas did land at Latium.

But if it creates a difficulty for any that many tombs of Aeneas are both said to exist and are shown in many places, whereas it is impossible for the same person to be buried in more than one place, let them consider that this difficulty arises in the case of many other men, too, particularly men who have had remarkable fortunes and led wandering lives. And let them know that, though only one place received their bodies, yet the monuments were erected

42 C.H. Heithaus, S.J., The History of the Aeneas Legend, 27
among many peoples through the gratitude of those who had received some benefits from them, particularly if any of their race still survived or if any city had been built by them or if their residence among any people had been long and distinguished by great humanity — just such things in fact, as we know related of this hero. . . . What reasons pray, could anyone assign for his monuments in Italy if he never reigned in these parts or resided in them or if he was entirely unknown to the inhabitants.43

The hero of whom Dionysius is speaking is Aeneas and from what he says it is easy to see that Aeneas did land in Italy.

For further establishment of this conjecture that Aeneas did land in Latium, let us turn to an historian Thucydides, who presumably has investigated the facts, and has arrived at the conclusion that there was a Trojan settlement in Italy.

In the sixth book of his history, when he describes the Athenians' second attempt to subdue Sicily, Thucydides mentions the history of the settlement of the island. It is here that he introduces the refugees from Troy. Although the Trojans were not the first to settle in Sicily, yet he does mention them as founding a colony there.

But on the capture of Troy, some of the Trojans, having escaped the Greeks, came in vessels to Sicily and having settled in the neighborhood of the Sicanians, they were all together called Elymi and their cities Eryx and Segesta. There was also settled with them some of the Phocians, who, while returning from Troy, were carried by a tempest first to Libya, and then from that country to Sicily.\footnote{Thucydides, \textit{Sicilian Expedition}, trans. by Henry Dale, New York, 1928}

Although Thucydides does not mention Aeneas by name, it might be easily deduced from what he does say and from what is known of the story of Aeneas that this passage is another source for the story which Virgil built around the Trojan hero.

The story of Aeneas, as we have seen in earlier poets, states that Aeneas left Troy after its capture by the Greeks. Due to the uncertainty of sailing in those days, Aeneas might have been drawn off his course and first reached Libya where he met Dido, and later continued his voyage to the shores of Sicily. From what has been said by Thucydides and from what has been previously seen, we conclude that the Trojans mentioned by him were led to the shores of Sicily by Aeneas.

Through the pages of this chapter we have traced the growth of the Aeneas legend to give us a more perfect picture of
Aeneas and to give some foundation for Virgil's choice when he made Aeneas the hero of his story. When Virgil went to look for the hero of his story, he would most certainly look for some character who had behind him a literary tradition which would insure immediate reception. In order to glorify Augustus, Virgil must choose as a forefather a man who had descended from the gods and who had achieved his heroic stature through their favor. With the literary tradition that the legend of Aeneas enjoyed and with the favor of the Greek poets who had treated him, we begin to see more reasons for Virgil's choice of Aeneas.
CHAPTER III

THE RECEPTION AND GROWTH OF THE

LEGEND AT ROME

The growth of the Aeneas legend is due in great part to the growth of Greek maritime influence. As Greek merchants landed at various ports along the Mediterranean, they flattered the natives of the cities where they found shrines dedicated to the worship of Aphrodite Aineias, by telling them that Aeneas was the one who had founded their shrine and was the first to make any settlement there. Around these various shrines grew many independent legends of Aeneas. The growth of these legends plays an important part in the final formulation of the legend as it was received by Virgil. In this chapter we will trace the growth of the legend among the Romans and show just how it influenced Virgil's choice of an epic hero.

About the second century before Christ the Roman Eagle began its march of conquest. When Rome finally subdued the Greek world, all initiative on the part of the Greeks for fostering their literature and various legends died. They turned their attention to their mighty conquerors and in their contempt for
the conquering Romans heaped opprobrious names upon them. To the Greeks the Romans were some barbarous nation from the west who were nothing more than uncultured rustics. In answer to the insults of the Greeks the Romans, in self defense, seized upon the Aeneas legend and saw in it a claim to their own nobility. The Aeneas legend was, as it were, a page taken from the bible of the Greeks, and it became for the Roman an insurance of his own nobility and divine origin.

As Roman power spread, the Aeneas legend became more popular among the conquering Romans. For in it they saw a title to their own divine origin. The various legends became nothing more than an episode in the travels of Aeneas which carried him from Troy to Latium. Here we have one of the most important factors for the growth of the legend, namely a willingness among the Romans to accept it and develop it to accomplish their own designs. But we might ask ourselves just how a legend of Greek origin became such a part of Roman tradition. Before we discuss the growth of the legend and its treatment at the hands of the

45 Heithaus, *The History of the Aeneas Legend*, 28

46 Ibid., 28
earlier Romans, we will answer the question of how Aeneas became such a part of Roman tradition.

Within one hundred years after the founding of Rome, Greek trading ports dotted the coast of Italy. The ambitious Greek traders were not content to trade with the coastal town but penetrated farther inland and came more into contact with Roman culture. The Greeks had many things to offer the unlettered Romans. Naturally they told their conquerors of the adventures of Aeneas. They even went so far as to mention Greek deities and that Aeneas in particular as the one who had brought these gods to their shores. Gradually the Greek traders flattered the ignorant Romans with the possibility that Aeneas was the founder of Rome.

The birth of Roman religious consciousness was motivated by their own social instinct in which they wished to influence the gods to cause them to smile propitiously on them and shower their favors on all Roman endeavors. This becomes more evident when we see the names of Roman gods.

47 J.B. Carter, The Religious Life of Ancient Rome, Boston, 1911, 63
He (the Roman) turned to his Penates to keep the penus, his larder stocked, to Faunus to make his sheep bear lambs; Lupercus would keep the wolves away, Flora brightened his garden, Terminus prevented his neighbours from trespassing on his fields; Robigus was propitiated lest he should inflict red rust on the farmer’s wheat; Portunus must be trusted to look after the harbours, and Fortuna to do what she could for the worshipper with things that came by chance.48

Later the ancient Roman began to feel that he was subject to the caprice of the gods and that he had to propitiate them that he might enjoy their benefits. Thus the Roman became superstitious, and at this point ancient religion reaches its lowest ebb.49

It was at this point of his religious development that the early Roman looked for gods to whom he could cling in time of need. This left him open to the influence of the Greek traders who had penetrated inland and had become acquainted with this poor superstitious Roman. Willingly would the Roman listen to the Greek account of his own gods who, clothed in human form, embodied all the virtues of human nature. The prospect of accepting such gods began to entice the ignorant Roman.

48 R.S. Conway, The Etruscan Influence on Roman Religion, Manchester, 1932, 4

49 Ibid., 64
Willingly the dull Roman would accept the gods offered by the Greeks because the Roman, in his state of superstition, was more attracted by concrete deities than by some abstract power which demanded only propitiation. But the early Roman was a little slow to believe that Aeneas was the founder of his city. He was satisfied with the story of Romulus. In fact, he had come in contact with the very scenes and places so intimately connected with the legend and traditions of Romulus.

This unwillingness on the part of Romans did not stop the cunning Greeks. They easily reconciled the story of Aeneas with the already existing and official legend of Romulus. Lavinium, not Rome, was the city founded by Aeneas. The Romans well knew that Romulus was the son of a princess of Alba Longa which in early times had been established as a colony of Lavinium. It might easily have been that the princess was the daughter or granddaughter of Aeneas.

For a race less inventive than the Greeks such an answer would have been discouraging. But they had an explanation for everything. Aeneas came to Latium but did not himself found the city of Rome. It was Lavinium that he founded, Lavinium the sacred city of the Latin race and the central shrine of its penates. These mysterious Lavinian penates, of which the Romans knew nothing save that they were ancient, were doubtless the very gods of Troy carried from the burning city by Aeneas. As for Romulus it was well known that he was the son of the princess of Alba Longa, a
city founded from Lavinium. Was it not reasonable then to suppose that this princess was the daughter or granddaughter of Aeneas.50

It is difficult to ascertain with any kind of certitude whether later Roman authors accepted the Aeneas legend as the Greeks related it and thus constituted Aeneas as the ancestor of Romulus. Even as late as Livy there was some doubt, but he is more inclined to accept the fact that Romulus was some descendant of Aeneas and that Aeneas was the one who had founded the city of Lavinium. However, the number of generations which intervened between the landing of Aeneas and the birth of Romulus is quite uncertain.

This event removed any doubt in the minds of the Trojans that they had brought their wanderings to an end at last in a permanent and settled habitation. They founded a town, which Aeneas named Lavinium, after his wife. In a short time, moreover, there was a male scion of the new marriage, to whom his parents gave the name of Ascanius.51

In poets of a later age we find many references to the fact that Romulus was a descendant of Aeneas. These men seem to have taken into account the legend related by the Greek traders and incorporated it into the history of Rome. In the fragments

50 Heithaus, The History of the Aeneas Legend, 28

51 Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, trans. by B.O. Foster, Loeb Series, New York, 1925, 11
of Ennius we find various mentions of the Aeneas legend. Miss Ethel Mary Steuart commenting on the fragment "Constitit inde loci propter sos dia diarum." Bk 1, Fr. 10 states:

The appearance of Venus. It is generally assumed that the person to whom she came was Aeneas because it is so in Virgil. But the plural sos clearly suggests that there were at least two men present, and it is natural to suppose the second was Anchises. Our fragment and the next seem to refer to the legend preserved by Dionysius and evidently used by Sophocles in the Laocoon, that Aeneas withdrew to Mt. Ida on the advice of Anchises, who had been instructed to urge him to do so by Venus. Venus herself is probably the speaker in fragment eleven, and Anchises and Aeneas are both with her. We must recognize here one of the many features in which the Virgilian legend of Aeneas differs from that current in earlier times; and certainly there is no suggestion in Ennius of the rescue of Anchises from the fallen city. 52

Mr. E.H. Warmington briefly introduces the same fragment by saying, "Venus appears to Aeneas and his companions."53 And introducing the next fragment, face vero quod tecum precibus pater orat, states, "She tries to persuade Aeneas to obey Anchises and retire to Mount Ida."54

52 Ethel Mary Steuart, The Annals of Quintus Ennius Cambridge, England, 1925, 105
54 Ibid., 11
The content of these fragments will give us some indication at least that the Aeneas legend was known to Rome as early as the time of Ennius. The fact that this poet should have mentioned the legend has more significance than might at first appear; for ancient authors were of the opinion that Ennius was the reincarnated Homer.\footnote{55}

The mention of Aeneas by Ennius was supposed to give the hero the sanction of the divinities. Later in his history of Rome Ennius corroborates the tales related by the Greek traders that Romulus was a true descendant of Aeneas.

Again Miss Steuart commenting on the fragments, Sep­tingenti sunt paulo plus aut minus anni Augusto augurio postquem incluta condita Roma est, states:

As Ennius held Romulus to be the grandson of Aeneas, he can hardly have supposed more than a century to have elapsed

\footnote{55 Schol. \textit{Ad Persium}, Prol. 2,3, Tangit Ennium qui dixit se vidisse per somnium in Parnasso Homerum sibi dicentem quod ejus anima in suo esset corpore.}

\footnote{Schol. \textit{Persius}, VI, 9,11, \ldots sic Ennius ait in Annalium suerum principio, ubi dicit se vidisse in somnis Homerum dicentum quondom pavonem et ex eo translatam in se animan esse secundum Pythagorae philosophi definitionem.}
between the destruction of one city and the foundation of another.  

An historian of a later date, Quintus Fabius Pictor, makes mention of Aeneas who in a dream saw the future greatness of the city which he was to found.

Mr. H.J. Rose makes the following comment on Quintus Fabius Pictor:

Quintus Fabius Pictor, who took an active part in the second Punic War, wrote in Greek a History of Rome down to his own day. His was a family quite unusual for the culture of that nation and age, for it is recorded that one of its members was a painter, apparently of some merit, whence the surname. His history was apparently Greek in spirit as well as in language or rather Hellenistic; for it began with the account of the foundation of Rome. . . hence Fabius did not scruple to insert a story of a dream wherein Aeneas saw all that was to befall him, and the familiar tales of the white sow and her farrow, the adventures of Romulus and Remus and so forth, filled part of his work.

Lucius Aelius Tubero, an historian of the age of Caesar, wrote a history of Rome which was primarily intended to glorify Caesar. There is no indication whether he ever published his work. Mr. Rose makes the subtle comment that "as usual the starting point was the foundation of Rome, including the

56 Steuart, Annals, 204

57 H.J. Rose, A Handbook of Latin Literature, London 1936, 113
As late as the time of Cicero, Publius Nigidius Figulus, an erudite mystic, wrote a work dealing with theology. His most famous theological treatise is entitled "De Dis." In this work we find him inquiring into the origin of the Roman Penates, whether they were the same gods brought to Rome by Aeneas.

Nigidius also in the treatise "De Dis" asks whether the Penates of Trojans are the Roman gods Apollo and Neptune (for the Trojans are said to have built these walls of Rome.) He also asks whether these are the gods brought to Rome by Aeneas. 59

In general the outline of the Aeneas legend has been the story of the wanderings of Aeneas which finally brought him to the shores of Latium after the fall of Troy. Many of the stopping-off places of Aeneas are easily accounted for because it is most likely that at these ports shrines were found dedicated to the worship of Aphrodite. But the Dido episode

58 Ibid., 204
59 Macrobus, Satires, III, 4-6, The translation is by the author.
presents a far more difficult problem. In it Aeneas is not only brought to a land where there could not have been a shrine dedicated to Aphrodite, but he is even driven off his general course. It is an episode of foreign flavor and does not easily admit of being incorporated into the rest of the story of Aeneas. For in the Dido episode Aeneas does not come in contact with any members of the Greek race who might add prestige to the legend.

Historians of Latin literature believe that Naevius, a chronicler of the first Punic War, was the first to introduce the story of Dido into the existing legend of Aeneas. Naevius, being somewhat of an historian, had to delve into antiquity in order to find some explanation of the hostilities then in progress between the Romans and Carthaginians. To give this explanation for the war, Naevius introduced this episode to show the Romans of his day that home was still under the protection of the fates and that the war was nothing more than a stage in the divine plan.

Macrobius commenting on the Aeneid related the

60 Glover, *Virgil*, 102
At the beginning of the Aeneid a tempest is described, and Venus complains. The whole of this passage is taken from Naevius, and comes from the first book of the Punic Wars. For there in the same way, when the Trojans are laboring in a tempest, Venus complains to Jupiter, and there follows words of Jupiter comforting his daughter with hopes for the future.61

Fr. C.H. Heithaus substantiates our claim that Naevius was the first to introduce the Dido episode into the Aeneas legend.

This brings us to another and far more difficult problem, viz. that of the Vido incident. It not only carries Aeneas far off his normal course to a place where there was no Greek shrine dedicated to Aphrodite, but assigns to a character neither Trojan nor Greek nor Roman a role second only to that of Aeneas. How came this strikingly foreign element to attach itself to the story, and at what date did it become permanently embedded in it? At the very dawn of Latin literature it appears in the earliest recorded Roman version of the legend that Naevius, the chronicler of the first Carthaginian War, is the originator. The majority of those who have studied it have therefore concluded that it was invented by him to give the Roman hatred for Carthage the sanction of antiquity.62

Mr. T. R. Glover also writes in confirmation of the


62 Heithaus, The History of the Aeneas Legend, 28
statement that Naevius was the first to introduce the Dido episode into the Aeneas legend.

Naevius, who served in the first Punic War and wrote its history in Saturnian verse, was the first poet to touch the tale. He is supposed to have traced the feud of Rome and Carthage back to Aeneas and Dido, telling of Troy's burning, of the escape of Aeneas and Anchises, the voyage and visit to Dido.63

Judging from the fragments of Naevius and taking into account the literary rydeness of the early Romans, it is quite inconceivable that such an addition to the legend of Aeneas should spring solely from the mind of Naevius. The incident with Dido seems to be a legend in itself and not just a mere addition. The origin of this episode bears further investigation.

When the Greeks landed in Sicily in the seventh and sixth century, they found already existing Phoenician trading shrines dedicated to the worship of Astarte. Fr. Heithaus believes that there was a literary tradition among the Phoenician traders similar to that of the Greeks. The central figure of the Phoenician folk-lore was much similar to that of Aeneas who

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63 Glover, Virgil, 102
had been exiled from his ancestral home and forced to wander the seas in search of a new home. As with Aeneas the Phoenician hero was under the guidance of the gods. When the Greeks landed on the shores of Sicily, the mingled more or less freely with the Phoenician traders. The name of Phoenician hero resembled the Greek name Dido who, according to tradition, was believed to have been a woman. Gradually the two stories coalesced until Aeneas was forced to Carthage by a storm and there became a lover of the Phoenician Dido.

As long as peace existed between the two nations, Aeneas and Dido remained together as lovers. But when Greek maritime power began to spread and drive the Phoenician ships from the trading ports, enmity grew between the two. Gradually as the two nations drew apart, Dido as representing the Phoenicians began to turn her love for Aeneas into hatred. This is well explained by the fact that the Phoenicians recognized in the Greeks a traitor who had destroyed the bond of union existing between them.

During the first Punic War, when the Romans recognized in the alien power across the Mediterranean a natural rival, the significance of the sojourn of Aeneas with Dido took on a new meaning. Looking upon the present Phoenicians as descendants of
Dido, they traced the present enmity then existing between Rome and Carthage back to the hatred Dido had for the founder of their Rome. Thus the episode with Dido was signaled out to serve the war propagandists with a ready justification for the hostility between Rome and Carthage.

If this hypothesis is correct, it was not Naevius who was the first to introduce the Dido incident into the Aeneas legend. Maevius then, in my opinion, did nothing more than catalogue the already existing fragments of the legend, as Glover mentions,64 and make them serve the Roman war-lords who were trying to stir up the peace-loving Romans to war with their enemies across the sea.

Therefore, from the works of men like Naevius, Ennius, and Fabius Pictor we might conclude with reasonable assurance that the legend of Aeneas had become a part of the history of the founding of Rome. All of them seem to agree that Romulus, the traditional founder of the city, was the grandson of Aeneas. The fact that the legend should have so infiltrated into the Roman tradition must have taken a number of centuries. For the Romans do not seem to be a people who would easily allow their

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64 Glover, Virgil, 102
national tradition, that of Romulus, to be taken from them. One logical explanation of the Roman willingness to accept the tradition of Aeneas was that Homer had invested Aeneas with the great Roman pietas, which is seen in his favor with the gods. Aeneas also was destined by the gods to found a new race. The Romans, who were always trying to trace their origin to the gods, flattered themselves by saying that Rome was the city destined by the gods to rule the earth.

That Virgil should have fixed his attention on the Aeneas legend was inevitable. Aeneas had been accepted by most poets as the founder of the city out of which sprang Rome. He could trace his ancestors to the gods, a fact which in the case of Romulus was rather uncertain. Livy is quite explicit about mentioning the point that the father of Romulus was Mars, but this is not an established fact. Undoubtedly this element must have greatly influenced Virgil in the choice of his hero and will be seen at greater length in the following chapter. Since Virgil in the Aeneid wished to glorify Augustus with the title "Divus" he could not very well choose a hero whose lineage was altogether uncertain.

Furthermore, Augustus, in his revival of Roman religion, fostered with special care the cult of those deities who were
Among those divinities who received his special attention was Venus. It was Venus who figured so prominently in the wanderings of Aeneas, and it is worthy of note to point out that Augustus, as well as many other noble Romans of his day, claimed descent from the Trojans and could justly assert that they were of divine lineage.

When Augustus seized the imperial power, he lorded it over all the other patrician families. The claim of his grand-uncle Julius Caesar became his claim. He looked upon all others with such condescension as was befitting the heir of Aeneas. Augustus realized more than ever that without this claim as the ancestor of Aeneas he could not maintain his social prestige.

After the present inquiry we can see how the Romans received the Aeneas legend from the Greeks. We also begin to see various reasons for Virgil's choice of Aeneas as the hero of his epic. Perhaps the claim of Augustus to be an ancestor of

66 Prescott, *The Development*, 145
Aeneas was the predominating motive in Virgil's choice. However, a later chapter will deal at greater length with Virgil's motive in his choice of Aeneas.
CHAPTER IV

VIRGIL'S MOTIVATION IN THE AENEID

The motives which influenced Virgil to undertake the composition of the Aeneid are to be sought in his own genius and in the political and social conditions of the poet's own age.

The motives and purpose influencing Virgil to undertake the composition of the Aeneid are to be sought partly in the state of public feeling at the time when he commenced his task, and partly in the direction given to his genius by the personal influence of Augustus. As the author of the Georgics he had established his position as the foremost poetic artist of his time. 66

Virgil's fame as the foremost poet of his age was already established by his publication of the Georgics. By it he had entered into rivalry with the greatest poets of all times. In the Georgics Virgil had shown just how great his poetic genius really was. In these poems he had given full expression to the tranquillity and beauty of Roman rural life. He had expressed in beautiful language the subject which was

very dear to his own rustic life. In the composition of this work he had taken into account the sentiment and feelings of the Roman elite of his day. Romans of Virgil's day had forgotten the dangers to the state with the victory of Actium. From the turmoil and strife of a bitter internecine war they turned their attention to the peace and solitude of the country, Virgil gave full expression to this sentiment in the Georgics. 67

Though in the Georgics Virgil had put forth to the utmost of his capacities sentiment and passion in the movements of nature and beautifully portrayed living interest in the actions and festivities of rural life, he had yet to portray in beautiful and poetic language the feelings and emotions of human life. In the composition of the Georgics he had developed his literary talents to a great degree, and with this growth he felt an urge to perfect himself in his art to the utmost of his capacities. Gradually his sole ambition came to be the desire to produce an epic of lasting fame which would insure his own place in posterity and leave for generations to follow some monument to his

67 Ibid., 296
nation's greatness. 68

A great leader, a national need, and a crisis prompted Virgil to exercise his ability as a poet and produce a poem which would serve the needs of his country. 69 He wished to give full expression to the national sentiment of unity which followed the victory of Augustus at Actium. There was a great feeling of relief after the world had been freed from the menace of oriental despots. The worried look on Roman countenances gave way to a look of peace and security. This sentiment found full expression in the words of Horace, "Now let us drink and tread the earth with dancing mirth." 70

Virgil's purpose, therefore, in his epic was to serve his country's needs and help Augustus restore the Rome of loose morals and license to the virtuous Rome of the ancient fathers. Virgil did not, under the auspices of Augustus, scruple to make his epic a servant of the state. 71 To understand fully Virgil's purpose in the Aeneid, we must first understand the political

68 Ibid.,
69 Prescott, The Development, 151
70 Horace, Odes, I,37, trans. by C.J. Kraemer, New York, 1936, 179
71 Prescott, The Development, 151
and social conditions which confronted Augustus whom this epic was to serve.

After the defeat of the Carthaginians Roman patriotism grew strong. With the lapse of time the Roman sense of security surged to a new high. Mighty Rome began to feel that she could never fall. People became more occupied with their own luxury than with the affairs of state. Thus with the growth of luxury a great stimulus to patriotism and nationalism was removed.

The beginning of Roman decline is due in great part to the reforms of Marius. It was he who first dealt the death blow to state supremacy. The great armies of Rome formed a loose democracy within their own ranks. Gradually they became detached from the central authority at Rome and rallied around individual leaders such as Pompey and Caesar. This gave initiative to Roman generals to gather round them as many armies as possible, not for the defense of the state, but for their own advancement. This state of affairs led to incessant civil wars and bloodshed which gradually brought the mighty Roman power almost to its knees. In such a state we begin to feel that Sulla and Caesar did not fight to preserve the power of Rome but to serve their own personal ambitions.
The reform of Marius dealt the first serious blow to the fabric of state supremacy. By democratizing the army, by increasing the power of the commander to reward his soldiers, he laid the foundation of that personal devotion to the individual leader, that was to have such disastrous consequences for the republic and end in its dissolution. When Sulla marched his army to the gates of Rome, he gave the death blow to the idea of unquestioning loyalty to the state, which had hitherto swayed Roman feeling. Now personal ambition begins to dominate Roman history, and was to issue in that long and dreary series of civil wars, which cast their gloom over the closing years of the Republic.  

Roman history had hitherto dealt with the glories of the Roman state, but amidst the confusion of the time, men of letters felt more inclined to attach themselves to an individual leader and to sing his glories. Thus Roman history becomes a personal thing dealing with the individual, singing his virtues, ambitions, sufferings, and triumphs.

This increase of individuality is due in great part to the influx of Greek philosophy with its emphasis on the individual. Stoic philosophy tended to give the individual a rather narrow attitude towards life. He was to close up within

72 J.F. D'Alton, Horace and His Age, 39
73 D'Alton, Horace, 39
himself and let the rest of the world go by. If men firmly believed such ideas, why should they concern themselves with the affairs of state? Naturally with the increase of such ideas, men would tend to look out for themselves and not worry about other things, even the government.

As the Roman eagle spread its wings farther eastward, Rome came in contact with oriental cults and customs. Gradually the softness of the East found its place in Rome. With this influx of Orientalism came the lessening of morals, and the paramount aim of the Roman became his own personal pleasure and ambition. The sanctity of the home gave way to the evils of divorce and prostitution. No longer was the home the center of union. Children were a burden to a nation primarily intent on its own pleasure. The population of the cities of Italy and other Roman possessions decrease as the evils of the time increased. The stolid Rome of Ennius and Cato was falling, falling into a heap of its own misery and degradation. The general tendency of the time is seen in Horace's lament in the thirty-seventh ode of the first book.

No persian pomp, my boy, for me!
No chaplets from the linden tree!
And for late roses, let them be
Unculled, unheeded.74

74 Horace, Odes, 1, 37, trans. by Kraemer
This was the state of the Roman Republic when Augustus assumed the supreme authority. At the battle of Actium he had freed the western world from the influence of Orientalism. Hence, because of this liberation from Orientalism, at no other time in the history of Rome was there a more opportune setting to awaken the Roman populace to that sense of nationalism which it had once felt. Augustus took upon himself the task of restoring this feeling of nationalism and reviving the ancient cults of the fathers which had fallen into abeyance, of awakening in the Roman heart the lofty qualities of pietas, virtus, and fortitudo.

Augustus' policy of reform had to affect the elite most of all and, after they had been won over, to work on the common people. He saw the chance of propagating his policy of reform through literature. Through literary composition he could contact the influential men who might, in turn, influence the people. Legislation could accomplish a great deal, but it would not give the necessary motivation which could be had only by appealing to a Roman pride which glorified in the achievements of its ancient fathers. To men of letters he turned his attention and gave them the commission to restore by their writ-
ings the ancient glories of the past. 75

The poetry of the age reflects the ambitions of Augustus. Horace as the sacerdos of Rome was to awaken in the youth of the nation the sentiments and feelings of the golden past.

For country 'tis sweet and seemly thing
To die. Death ceases not from following
E'en runaways. Can youth with feeble knees
That fears to face the battle, scape his wing? 76

On all sides poets set their pen to the task of singing in beautiful language the Augustine concept of the virtuous Roman. Poets, however, were not entirely to dwell on the past but were in some degree forced to think of the future and of that golden age which would be restored by the heaven-sent saviour who was already among them in the form of Augustus.

This then was the situation which confronted Virgil as he set about writing the epic which had been the dream of his childhood.

Virgil needed no further motivation for writing an epic than that which the present state of affairs offered.

75 Prescott, The Development, 149
76 Horace, Odes, III, 2, trans. by Kraemer
Augustus had given him reason enough to believe that he might be able to equal Homer in the composition of an epic. All that Virgil had to do was to compose an epic which would serve Augustus in his political, moral, religious, and social reform. His highly trained faculty had already been proved in the publication of the *Georgics* and *Eclogues*. "This was guarantee enough for any artistic execution which he might undertake."77

A great poet is usually known by the reception his poetry actually does receive at the hands of lovers of literature. Virgil, in order to insure his epic a reception, had to invent a new method of poetry. It had been the custom of the predominating school of poetry at Rome, that of Alexandria, to sing the glories of the past. But already the Roman world had felt too much the influx of Alexandrian poetry with its emphasis on the past and its much ado about nothing. Rome had become disgusted with this. The problem which confronted Virgil was to treat of some subject which would meet approval at Rome. He had found a topic in the great feeling of nationalism which the Romans felt and in the intended revival of Augustus. He must incorporate the events of his day and the intention of Augustus into his epic.

77 Sellar, *Roman Poets*, 297
But every poet knows that he attempts in vain to give an epic treatment to the events of his own day. An epic must deal with some hero who is related to the early days of a nation. The hero of a national epic must be the hero of the state. The victory at Actium, the revival of Augustus were subjects in themselves which might receive some attention, but were not subjects which would give an epic flavor to the work. Virgil must choose a hero who was legendary and who could be treated to glorify Augustus.

Both Virgil and Horace had recognized the great genius of Ennius and Naevius but also had recognized them as poets who were not to be imitated. They had recognized the superior style of the Alexandrian School but had also recognized that school's poverty of material. Had Virgil's sole intention been to imitate and equal Ennius and Naevius, he might have found in them a ready model. But his ambition was not to equal them but to surpass them. His ambition drew him even higher in his attempt to enter into rivalry with the greatest of all Greek poets, Homer.

Both Ennius and Naevius had set the example of connecting a continuous narrative of events of their own time with the mythical glories and the traditional history of Rome. And the introduction of the third Georgic indicates that some idea of this kind at one time hovered before the
imaginations of Virgil. But while moved by some patriotic impulses as the older poets, Virgil must have felt as strongly as Horace did that they were examples to be avoided in the choice of form and mode of treatment. He aspired not only to surpass Ennius and Naevius in the office they fulfilled but to enter into rivalry with Homer, -- to perform for the Romans of the Augustan age a work analogous to that which Homer performed for the Greeks of his age.\(^7\)

Virgil's ambition led him to seek some topic of mythical times upon which he could bestow undying fame. Into this topic he had to breathe the emotions and feelings and sentiments which were the feelings of the Romans of his day. He had to incorporate into this treatment of his subject the intention of Augustus. The whole action of his epic had to symbolize in some degree the thoughts, memories, and hopes with which the public feeling was identified at the time the epic was written. Virgil's audience had to see in the actions, sufferings, and emotions of the actors of his epic more than the mere emotions and feelings of some fictional characters. The action of the poem had to be secondary in importance to the prime intention of the author. The real subject of the epic had to be as Virgil so well put it, **Tantae molis erat**

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78 Sellar, *Roman Poets*, 299
Romanam condere gentem.

This was Virgil's intention in writing the Aeneid. But the choice of a subject was something which presented a serious problem to the author. How was he to meet this difficulty? The question which faced Virgil is the same one which confronts us. For it is our purpose to show what led Virgil to choose Aeneas to be the hero of his epic. The answer to the problem will be found in the following chapter.
Virgil had found motivation enough for his epic in the desires of Augustus, but the subject which he could develop into an epic presented a far greater difficulty. He had two sources from which he could choose the hero of his epic, that of the Romulus legend and that of the Aeneas legend. Had Virgil's sole purpose been to write a national epic which would satisfy popular sentiment, many reasons could be easily summed up for his choice of Romulus. The subject of Romulus as the traditional founder of Rome had been in some degree a subject of Greek invention but had become a part of the tradition of Rome more than the subject upon which Virgil bestowed such undying fame. We learn from commentators that the Romulus account of the founding of Rome was still recognized and was still celebrated in national hymns. The she-wolf giving suck to the twins Romulus and Remus, had formed the subject of great

79 Sellar, Roman Poets, 301
works of art, and statues representing this event had been found in the atria of the wealthy and in public temples. Romulus had been the subject of the Annals of Ennius and had been so treated that at the hands of Ennius he had acquired an epic stature.

Had Virgil's sole purpose been to write a national epic, which would satisfy the people, we can imagine several reasons why the tale of Romulus should have been chosen in preference to that of Aeneas. It was celebrated in national hymns. It had been commemorated in famous works of art, the bronze she-wolf, still extant at a time antecedent to the origin of Roman literature. It had formed the chief subject of the first book of the Annals of Ennius, which dealing with the mythical portion of this theme, seems to have had more of an epic character than the later books. It also was the subject which by its relation to famous localities and memorials of the past, such as the oldest city wall, the Ruminal fig tree, the temple of Jupiter Stator, the Palatine and Aventine hills, and with the social and religious organization of the state admitted easily of being connected with the present time.

After the victory at Actium, Augustus had restored peace to the empire. In his intended social and religious revival he had taken upon himself the task of becoming the second founder of Rome. Because of this he had at one time seriously contemplated taking the surname of Romulus because

80 Ibid, 301
he not only considered himself the second founder, but was also recognized as such by the people. And because of this reputation of Augustus, the legend of Romulus could have been treated by Virgil to magnify the glory of Augustus by bestowing upon the hero Romulus the glories and ambitions of the emperor.

From the time of Philip of Macedon oriental potentates had not only assumed the title *Divus*, but were even granted this divine title by their loyal subjects. The role of the gods in ancient mythology had been that of civilizers; for it had been they who first taught men the mystery and control of the natural elements. Wherever the gods had made their presence felt, there had been an era of civilization and culture. Such was the case with ancient rulers; for they also had brought the light of Greek civilization to their barbaric conquered tribes. Therefore, as civilizers of men, oriental despots assumed the divine title and had set themselves up as objects of worship.

So too with Augustus. Had he not saved Rome from the barbaric influences of the East by his victory at Actium? It was he who had found a Rome of stone and left it a Rome of marble. As the saviour of Rome, he also wished to assume the title *Divus*.

To assume this divine title Augustus would have to
trace his ancestry back to the gods. The poet who would sing of his fame would have to make known this divine lineage. Therefore, the poet would have to begin with the lineage which for certain could be traced to the gods.

To fulfill the desires of Augustus and accomplish a work which would readily lend itself to the intended religious and social revival, Virgil had to choose a hero who would embody the virtues of Augustus proposed for himself and Roman youth. Furthermore, Virgil's hero, as the founder of Rome, had to be a descendant of the gods. From this fact Virgil might easily draw the conclusion that Augustus, as the second founder of Rome, descended from the gods and had received his commission to reestablish Rome as the mighty mistress of the world. The hero must have a divine commission to re-introduce into the new nation the cults which were most dear to the gods. The hero must embody the great virtues which the emperor thought he had. The hero of the epic must also have a lofty vocation which would embody Augustus' vocation.

But could not Virgil find all these divine qualities in Romulus? It was Romulus who had introduced the cults of distinct Roman flavor. He had been set aside as the leader who would destroy the envious tribes of Italy and establish for Rome the
title of mistress of all Italy and eventually of the world. Romulus had even received a divine commission. True, Romulus might have embodied all the virtues of Augustus, but one thing was lacking, and most likely this was the reason which deterred Virgil from choosing him as the hero of his epic, namely, the lineage of Romulus.

In the first book of Livy's history the account of Romulus' birth is given.

But the fates were resolved; as I suppose, upon the founding of this great city, and the beginning of the mightiest of empires, next after that of Heaven. The Vestal was ravished, and having given birth to twin sons, named Mars as the father of her doubtful offspring, whether actually so believing, or because it seemed less wrong if a god were the author of her fault. But neither gods nor men protected the mother herself or her babes from the king's cruelty; the priestess he ordered to be manacled and cast into prison, the children to be committed to the river... The story persists that when the floating basket in which the children had been exposed was left high and dry by the receding water, a she-wolf, coming down out of the surrounding hills to slake her thirst, turned her steps towards the cry of the infants, and with her teats gave them suck so gently, that the keeper of the royal flock found her licking them with her tongue. Tradition assigns to this man the name of Faustulus, and adds that he carried the twins to his hut and gave them to his wife Larentia to rear. Some think that Larentia, having been free with her favours, had got the name "she-wolf" among the shepherds, and that this gave rise to this marvellous story.

81 Livy, Ab Urbe Condita, trans. by Foster, I,4
In this account of Livy we notice two things. First, there was some divine intervention in the saving of the boys from death by exposure on the mountain. Second, their mother was a vestal virgin who had been consecrated to a life of chastity by a vow. The fact that the boys were born to her while she was under a vow, casts some shadow on the legitimacy of their birth; for, as Livy mentions, their father is uncertain. It was customary to believe that he was a god, but this is not sufficient to establish the fact. Whether their father was god or man, the added guilt incurred by reason of the mother's vow was enough to leave a stain on her twin sons, Romulus and Remus.

Virgil realized all this as he considered the possibility of choosing the legend of Romulus. Would Augustus approve of being the descendant of a man, who, though he had felt some divine intervention in his preservation, still could not for certain claim direct lineage from the gods? No, Augustus would hardly approve. The man who was to be his ancestor had to be one who was born in the grace of the gods and who could claim for certain the gods as his ancestors. Since the legitimacy of Romulus was not certain, were Virgil to choose him as a hero, he would in some degree give assent to
the evil practices and loose morals which Augustus, by his intended revival, was trying to curb. If the people realized that their emperor had as an ancestor one who was possibly conceived illegally, would not this give consent to their own passions and openly grant license? No, Virgil definitely could not choose Romulus.

Undoubtedly Virgil was acquainted with the Aeneas legend. In this legend, which was definitely of foreign origin, he began to see possibilities which would develop into the epic he had in mind. The Aeneas legend was one which had the literary and mythical approval of ten centuries and had been treated by the greatest of Greek poets. Despite this fact, the legend was very vague and indefinite and had been derived from primitive sources. The character of Aeneas was not individual nor were any of the characters who were followers of Aeneas clearly drawn by the older poets.

But here Virgil found a wealth of mythical background. It was impossible for a poet of Virgil's age to supply this background which was one altogether connected with a legendary tradition. Perhaps, however, a legend with such a tradition might offer to the poet the opportunity of giving substance to something which had a dim past. Here the poet could exercise
his own imaginative powers. Virgil's imagination had been shown to be fully developed in the Georgics where he was particularly susceptible to impressions of the past. Furthermore, the Aeneas legend was the only legend which the Romans knew to have any direct relation to the Homeric cycle.

But on other grounds the judgements of Virgil may be justified in the choice of this legend as most adapted to his own genius and the purpose of his epic poem. It was the only subject of national significance, connected with the Homeric cycle of events. Not only the epic and dramatic poets of Greece, but the Roman tragic poets had recognized the heroic legend of Greece as the legitimate material for representing human action and character with seriousness and dignity. . . The Romans themselves had mythical background, rich in poetic associations, to their own history. It was impossible for a poet of a literary age to create for himself this background. But it was possible for him to give substance and reality to the shadowy connection existing in legend and in the works of the older national writers, between the beginnings of Roman history and this distant region of poetry and romance.

Perhaps this legend which was dim and vague was the very thing Virgil was looking for. If he were to choose it, he would not be bound to relate cut and dry facts but could give his imagination material upon which to work. He could mold the character of Aeneas to represent him as the Augustus of the past.

82 Sellar, Roman Poets, 305
Although with the legend Virgil could not create a world of wonder - something very dear to the heart of a poet - he could, nevertheless, set before himself the very attractive aim of reviving the character and incidents of the past. Furthermore, he could treat them to give his contemporaries a picture of Homeric times. The subject of the wanderings of Aeneas would allow Virgil to examine in a new light the virtues of the martial age of the past and thus awaken a new martial spirit in a nation of soldiers.

The lineage of Aeneas was certain. All recorded incidents of Aeneas in Greek and early Roman literature relate as certain his birth from the goddess Venus. Therefore, by treating Aeneas, Virgil could give the sanction and approval of the past to the divinity of Augustus—-the very thing the emperor wanted and needed for his intended religious revival.

It is not quite clear whether the Romans ever recognized their genealogical connection with Troy before the time of the composition of the Aeneid. Nevertheless, this connection had been recognized in official acts for more than two centuries. As confirmation of this official recognition we relate an incidence noted in Mr. Sellar's book. As early as the first Punic War the Acarnanians had applied to the Romans for assistance against the Aetolians on the grounds that their ancestors
had taken part in the Trojan War and had fought for the Trojans. The senate had even offered friendship and alliance to King Seleucus on the ground that he exempt the Trojans from tribute because they were kinsmen of the Romans.

In confirmation of the official recognition of Roman connections with the Trojans we quote from Suetonius as he speaks of the Emperor Claudius.

He allowed the people of Ilium perpetual exemption from tribute, on the ground that they were the founders of the Roman race, reading an ancient letter of the senate and people of Rome written in Greek to King Seleucus, in which they promised him their friendship and alliance only on condition that he should keep their kinsfolk of Ilium free from every burden.83

From very ancient times the worship of the Roman penates had been recognized as introduced into Rome by Aeneas. Again, from very early times we find traces in Latin literature, at least, that Rome had descended from Aeneas. Thus Ennius begins his history of Rome from Aeneas. Poets of a later age had even gone so far as to entitle their account of the Roman

83 Suetonius, De Vita Caesarum, (Divus Claudius), trans. by J.C. Rolfe, Loeb Series, New York, 1920, XXV, 3
origin as Aeneadae. Lucretius "who stands apart from the 
traditional beliefs of his countrymen" begins his De Rerum 
Natura with the words Aeneadum genetrix. Livy gives us his 
satis constat to the founding of Rome by Aeneas.

Virgil was well acquainted with this traditional 
belief, and, though through his choice of Aeneas, he realized 
he could not appeal to popular fancy, he could, nevertheless, 
appeal to the national, religious, and social tastes of the 
more cultivated classes. He knew that the Aeneas legend, though 
less popular among the masses, could assign to the Roman state 
a more august origin than the legend of Romulus. Ab Jove 
principium generis, Jove Dardana pubes. Gaudet avo; rex ipse 
Jovis de gente suprema Troius Aeneas.

Undoubtedly these considerations must have influenced 
Virgil in his choice of Aeneas, but, to my mind, the motive which 
finally decided him was the fact that the Roman elite of his time 
were constantly tracing their own origin back to Aeneas and his

84 Sellar, Roman Poets, 306
85 Virgil, Aeneid, VII, 219-221
This consideration must have recommended Aeneas to Virgil as a more suitable subject to fulfill his purpose which was to write a national and religious epic. The claim of the Julian House to be descendants of Aeneas, Julus, and the goddess Venus must have been the first motive of Virgil to use Aeneas as his hero. Caesar is said to have had as his watchword at the battle of Pharsalia the words *Venus Victrix*. Undoubtedly a greater tribute could be paid to Augustus by representing his rule as being a prominent object in the counsels of heaven a thousand years before the actual time of his reign.

As had been mentioned before, the vagueness of the Aeneas legend and the indefiniteness of the character of Aeneas allowed Virgil to give his interpretation to the legend. He could not be held down to the bare facts of history, which probably would have been the case had his choice fallen on Romulus. He was not limited to any field or region in his treatment, but could embrace within his scope the origin of most of the towns of Italy which were connected with Rome and which Rome felt necessary for her reputation. Virgil too could introduce, in the absence of any definite customs, the customs which Augustus was most intent upon restoring, and by giving them the sanction of heaven could appeal to the Romans of his
own day. Furthermore, Virgil could exhibit his own conception of the ideal Roman and treat Aeneas as a character who was prominent for his piety and combine this virtue with his conception of the ideal Roman.
CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The object of this thesis has been to study the Aeneas legend as it has been handled by the Greek and Roman poets and to draw from this study, if we can, reasons which influenced Virgil in his final choice of Aeneas in preference to Romulus as the hero of his epic. At the end of the thesis the purpose of each chapter becomes more apparent, and now the conclusions of the separate chapters can be made to substantiate the statement of the thesis.

Aeneas had his origin at the hands of Homer in the Iliad. In this work it is clearly indicated that Aeneas was a descendant of the gods and had a claim to the great temporal heritage of Troy. From the very lips of the gods we hear of Aeneas’ vocation which is to carry the tradition and gods of Troy to some other land and there set up a kingdom which would equal the one time greatness of the fallen Troy. The findings of chapter one give us some idea of Virgil’s choice of Aeneas.
When Virgil set about undertaking the composition of his epic, he would most likely look for a hero who embodied all the qualities with which we find Aeneas endowed in the *Iliad*. Furthermore, the hero of Virgil's epic must be one with a heroic stature. The first chapter shows us that Aeneas does embody all the qualities of an epic hero. He is a man who reacts to circumstances as we might expect any individual to act. Aeneas embraces all the feelings and emotions of anyone of us when placed in like circumstances. Aeneas, as portrayed in the *Iliad*, embodies all the virtues which were the glory of Roman youth at the time of Virgil's composition. Homer invested him with the great Roman qualities of *virtus*, *pietas*, and *fortitudo*.

Chapter two shows Aeneas' prominence in early Greek poetry. He had been treated by Hesoid, and at this poet's hands could again claim divine descent and a promise of rule over the Trojans. He had also been given an important part in the poems of the Homeric cycle. Stesichorus' genius developed the legend to a fuller degree. Both Greek poets and historians had found admirable qualities in Aeneas and for this reason thought him worth mentioning in their works. The facts related in chapter two showed that the character of Aeneas had at the
time of Virgil a literary tradition of ten centuries. Since one of the purposes of Virgil in the composition of the Aeneid was to write a literary epic, a hero who had been the subject of various works for ten centuries would probably influence him in the choice of an epic hero. A hero with such a literary tradition could give Virgil's epic a certain prestige which would have been lacking, were his choice to fall upon some one who was less known to the world of literature.

In chapter three we saw the reception of the Aeneas legend at Rome. Here Aeneas had been received and recognized in official acts of the Senate. Probably the reason which most influenced Virgil to choose Aeneas was the claim of the Julian House to be descendants of Aeneas and Venus. Aeneas had already at the time of Virgil become a very important part of Roman tradition. All these facts, the official recognition of Aeneas as the founder of Rome, his recognition in literature, the claim of the Julian House, and many other claims of the Roman elite to be descendants of Aeneas, influenced Virgil in his final choice of Aeneas as the hero of his epic.

We can hardly understand Virgil's final choice of Aeneas as the hero of his epic unless we first understand his purpose in writing an epic. Virgil found motivation to write
his epic in the proposed revival of Augustus. In order to do this, Virgil would have to seek some character which would allow him considerable latitude in the formation of character and which would allow him to treat the hero in such a way as to embody the virtues of Augustus and which would lead to the glorification of the emperor. Augustus, in order to accomplish his religious revival, wished to assume the title **Divus**. If Virgil were to grant this title to the emperor, he would have to choose for his hero a man who could claim the gods as his ancestors. Virgil found such a man in the character of Aeneas. Also the vagueness of the legend of Aeneas allowed Virgil the latitude he wished in the final formation of his epic.

The choice of Aeneas over Romulus is the subject of the fifth chapter. Virgil could not very well choose Romulus as his hero because of the uncertainty of his lineage, because of the ambition of Augustus, and because it was almost a necessity to have a hero who was divine in his origin. Therefore, Virgil had to choose a hero who could trace his lineage to the gods. Augustus wished to assume the title **Divus**, and he thought this a necessity to accomplish his intended religious revival. Again, I think, Virgil was influenced most of all in this choice by the claim of the Julian House to be
descendants of Aeneas.

All these considerations influenced Virgil greatly in the choice of his hero and the fact that he had chosen a hero with such an origin and with such a literary tradition allowed him to assign the most august origin to the city of Rome. The whole subject of the reception of the Aeneid by Rome may be summed up in the words of Propertius. (II, 34, 65-66)

Cedite, Romani scriptores, cedite Grai
Nescioquid majus nascitur Iliade.
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The thesis submitted by John P. Beall, S.J. has been read and approved by three members of the Department of Classics.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Signature of Adviser